

BOT I

Praba Pilar



Fig. 1. *BOT I*, 2011, Praba Pilar, digital print © Praba Pilar

A monologue ripping through the patriarchal and masculinist meat body discourse I hear at the Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Information Technology, and Cognitive Neuroscience convergence conferences, meetings, and symposia I regularly attend. I am always astounded to witness the sea of aged white men postulate on the contemptible wet ware of the human body as a machinic interface that needs to rapidly be transformed and uploaded to hardware. These dying men volubly declare their new/old vision of a shifted birthright: the permanent overcoming of the illnesses, plagues, pains, and excretions of the human body; an overthrow of physical limitations that keep us trapped in the dimensionality of the senses; and finally, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual immortality in this imagined age of spiritual machines, to be unlocked by and intended for the chosen ones, once they find the right algorithm.



Fig. 2. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

A monologue slashing through white male mythology, the flattening of difference for a discursive standardization of humanity into middle class white male desire. A refusal of the legitimization of white Western myths of rationality, advancement, modernity, superiority clung to by the agents of neoliberal techno-advancement.



Fig. 3. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

A monologue referencing the real, the imagined, the invisible: Jackie Orr's [Panic Diaries](#) [1]; the future cunt of the VNS Matrix [Manifesto](#)

for the 21st Century [2]; the predominantly male and white conferences of the Foresight Nanotechnology Institute in Silicon Valley [3]; popular futurist and author Ray Kurzweil's [4] view that human uploads to advanced computing mechanisms is a "natural" evolution; the Methuselian Foundation leader Aubrey de Grey and his Longevity Escape Velocity concept [5] wherein human aging, and concomitant death, will be escaped; the increased rate of online trafficking of women for sexual exploitation, through enforced prostitution.



Fig. 4. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

A monologue constructed through Althusser's "interpellation," [6] drawing out the ideological constitution, interpellation and hailing of the subject in order to examine how technology functions as a mechanism of control in the advanced capitalist society of the United States. Subjects are not aware of the ideological constructs by which they are hailed. New developments, new products, new technological fixes fit within a celebratory matrix of discourse which is fundamentally an extension of progress narratives and ideas of Western expansion. I situate my own tensions with hailing and with the inside/outside of ideology as it applies to techno-capitalism.



Fig. 5. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

It came to me one day, this biting monologue uncoiling in angry retort. I was spewing on my contradictory feelings, experiences, and history with techno-capitalist culture, on my alienation and disenchantment, my addiction and my erotic charge. Hate, love, love, hate, love, hate, hate.



Fig. 6. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Janet Sarson (Used with permission.)

I had been watching, in hypnotic reflection, a YouTube video of Samuel Beckett's 1972 play "Not I." [7] I was fascinated by the profound alienation in the piece, the disembodiment, the rant, the story, the broken, repetitive, circling, non-linear narrative. I was riveted by the twisting, wretched mouth, the spitting out of words. I needed to do an interpretation of "Not I" based on my own techno-alienation.



Fig. 7. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Janet Sarson (Used with permission.)

My alienation comes out of the violent contradictions between the benefits and the damaging, often hidden effects of military, political, economic, social, and environmental applications of emerging technologies. These contradictions have deeply disturbed me for the last decade and a half, and have caused me to create numerous artistic and activist projects to generate a counternarrative to the utopian rhetoric of the techno-capitalist revolution.



Fig. 8. *BOTI*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

In the midst of this artistic epiphany, media artist Adriene Jenik invited me to present a two-minute performance as part of her project *Open_borders: Improvisation Across Networks, Distance, Timezones* at the *Actions of Transfer Conference* of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics at UCLA [8]. Her project was a web-based international performance event wherein performances from around the Americas would be web cast and streamed into a lounge at UCLA on the Saturday night of the conference. All the performances had to be done in front of a webcam. Perfect timing.



Fig. 9. *BOT I*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

I began with the lines from *Not I*, "out into this world... this world... tiny little thing... before its time..." and told my own story, my birth into a computer family, my early introduction to the materia prima of electronics, my later disillusionments working as a technologist, my love of instant communication, my disgust with military applications. As I spoke the words, I stuffed computer wiring into my mouth until the wiring deformed my mouth and I was left uttering incoherently. I watched this brief sketch projected on the wall of the lounge, and decided to develop it into a full-length piece, referencing many of the ideas and arguments, the hidden histories, the rebels and usurpers, of the tech-revolution.



Fig. 10. *BOT I*, 2011, Praba Pilar, performance still © Cisco (Used with permission.)

The 25-minute monologue *BOT I* draws on the texts of *Not I* by Beckett and *I Robot*, by Isaac Asimov [9]. Below is the script of the performance I presented at the Radical Philosophy Association Conference in Eugene, Oregon on November 13, 2010 [10].

Out... Into this world... this world... tiny little thing... before its time... Born in a cab racing to the hospital... five pounds and tiny... seeking out the world... falling in the hands of... father... father... father... father of life... padre de todas las fuerzas... padre amado... padre sagrado... cut my umbilical cord and introduced me to a world... bits... bytes... processor... coding... programming... network... binary... and I fit right in... I fit right in I tell you, playing with the little cogs... the little spidery cogs... parts... chips... data entry cards... electronic... all the way from Taiwan... Father... fathers... father... STOP... CODE BLUE... CODE BLUE... he would give me everything I wanted... Connect

me all over the world... spread me further than ever... Ooze me into the ionosphere... baby cyborg born into this world... el Nuevo Mundo... I would reach the zenith... analog to digital communion... Commune... commune... orgy of telepresence... WHY! WHY! WHY am I here all alone? Mega... Giga... Tera... Peta... Exa... Zetta... I want to be a cloud... a computing cloud... everywhere and nowhere at once... I was born for the new world order... speed up my mathematics... give me software, software, replace this wetware... Garage band symphonics... Singularity... Bioprospecting... Mechanosynthesis... A computer in every pot! Back me up baby... Put me on the remote server... speed me up... I'm ready for takeoff into the hyperbolic longevity escape velocity... I'm ready for Methusularity... I'm ready for... WAIT! The little children, the little children... WHAT?... Yes, little children... girls, boys, scraps... in my dreams... soft delicate skin... maybe 4? laughing and playing... playing Lego with digital parts... Are you 4? Picking through the breasts... little villages... standing on stacks of parts, digital dream... Picking through... Picking through WHAT? cadmium, beryllium, lead... Chinese villages... sucking brominated flame retardant breasts... WHY WHY WHY must my dreams be saturated... The children... Rivers of Toxins... WHAT?... CODE BLUE... CODE BLUE... NO!... You were going to clean up the world... Give us the paperless office... give us the power to fix... to fix at a higher intelligence... 700 hazardous chemicals in one little fix, not the fix I have in mind... But they're recycling... pero es un cuento sin fin... story never told... Ewaste stream north west... now south east... hazardous material... Boats of detritus... STOP... meat body, meat ware, wetware... he hates the meat body... father, father, father, incestor and abuser... schizophrenic and full with promise... the promise to live in the mind... yes... no body... new thoughts... new paradigms... new thresholds... Beyond the body, exploding a new frontier and then POOF Descartes! WHAT? I tell you Descartes... it was nothing new... filthy hatred of my body, my five pound body... threshold to transcend into a binary mapping of dendrites... Filthy body... leaky disruptive body... oozing obsolescence... STOP... CODE BLUE... CODE BLUE... I must become more efficient... MILITARY IDEOLOGY... human efficiency machine folding at longevity escape velocity... regeneration... back me up on your servers... transcend the body, my body, what body... all reason... all rationality... todo en la mente... mentation... depravation... sensory overlord... and I rise up with Sadie... I am the future cunt... The future cunt that will not upload... will not artificial... will not intelligence... will not go... I saw a rat, a rat I tell you... an ugly filthy rat in rotting ruins... chewing on the fetid minds of the smartest computer scientists with their robotic processing machines... against the laws... the three laws... Asimov, you are not presente! WHAT? a robot may not injure a human being... a robot you said... cannot allow a human being to come to harm... WHAT? a robot must obey orders... orders, disorders, borders... given by human beings... a robot must protect PROTECT... its own existence... WHAT? Ohhh

no hurting humans... I get you Asimov! Asimov! Where were you when DARPA came in... DARPA... WHAT? Defense Advanced Research Project Agency... Defense? Defense of WHAT? Advanced Research, into WHAT? DARPA was right on top of my body... DARPA my nemesis... ruination of visions... out into this world... tiny little thing... Now tentacles reaching into every lab... universities... research departments... robotic scientists... all over the world... DARPA... you are the pulse of robotics... there is nothing without you... killing machines... started small... tiny little thing... giganormous... forty three... now you fucked up... forty three countries military robotics... WHY? WHY? WHY?... you don't biomedical, you don't surgical, you don't telesurgery... DOG... WHAT? yes, DOG! DOG carries the burdens on the battle field... taken away our birthright... killers... killing machines...you negate me...Mega... Giga... Tera... Peta... Exa... Zetta... I saw the men... white, elite, masters of the universe... planning the future... leaving me out... WHY WHY WHY were there no other people there... WHY... I spied on you... to see your flesh... creamy... and fatigued... I joined Foresight... WHAT? Foresight Nanotechnology Institute... Nano Bio Info Cogno convergence meetings... I've seen your talks... End all poverty... end material want... provide everything for all... for everyone... in the world... WHAT?... I want this this this... I want this to be true... then I saw the men... implosions, negations, cruelty... no brethren there... no sisters... No no no, just white men, so elite, so rich... Nanophotonics... plasmonics... spreading the white male myth... in the technological arena... but you are so mistaken... I don't want to be a middle class white man... I don't want your rationality... ME CAGO EN TUS ZAPATOS... soy de Colombia... magical realism... indigenous plantations... vida sagrada... ritmos del sol... I am only good data... good plasma... I am your DNA sources... WHAT? DNA source... yes porque un buen indio, es un indio explotado... Biopiracy... bioprospecting... intellectual property... north south dynamics... Columbus, PRESENTE... rising... from the grave... Columbus I see you now so clearly... your new world order... disorder... gold rush... I see your Neem tree thefts... WHAT? You fuck me... taking and taking and taking... take me... take me... place me... spread me... connect me... dilate me... Make me... nothing outside of the new world border... Online... connected... Connected connected connected... Skyping my girl and losing myself into the data flow... erotics, pleasure, play... high speed sousveillance... somatic mutation... Skype me into the orgasmic flow... a little critter moving through the world... a better life... online job market... she goes... she participates... joins this new world frontier... trust... desperation... grind... and POOF... hell hole bordello... taken south east now west north... seventeen Johns a day... seventeen fucking Johns... rape, abduction, meat market... caught up... deportation... WHAT? Moving bodies... not telepresente... fresh innocent body... A tiny little thing... born into this world... this online world... meat flesh bodies... pimps and gps tags shot into bodies... tag those whores... you always know where they are... but it's a connection... Real dolls and bioprinting... online women... brutal rape... rape...

thousands trafficked ... girl... born in Russia... now in England... girl... born in la Republica Dominicana... now in Boston... girl, born in Brazil... now in Madrid... what is this new world order, border, disorder... body dilated... pulsated... videotronic... finding myself in the webcam repetitions... The webcam imitations, replication... Touching you around the world... WHAT? Telepresente baby... I'm here, I'm there, I'm everywhere... tiny little thing... born into this world... this social network... take me, lose me, prove me... brother are you online? Sister can you connect? NEGATRON... why are you not here? I know you exist... brown meat... dark meat... why can't you read me? Don't you speak English? Lingua franca... lingua extendida... Where are you? Where is your fiber optic presence? WHAT?... online penetration limited bandwidth... Territorial limits... but wait... WHO? Who is there?... I know you exist... meat... excludidos... desaparecidos... WHERE ARE YOU? Internet logics... digital delusions... moving bodies... transtime, transspace... transcend time space... NO: telepresencia... NO: binary coding... infinite trick... who am I in it... Disaffected? who are you... Disconnected... am I alone here? Am I alone?

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